



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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For More Information, Contact:  
Krissie Guerard or Rachel Birk  
HIV/AIDS/TB Program  
North Dakota Department of Health  
Phone: 701.328.2378  
E-mail: [kguerard@nd.gov](mailto:kguerard@nd.gov) or [rbirk@nd.gov](mailto:rbirk@nd.gov)

### **North Dakota Observes World TB Day**

BISMARCK, N.D. – March 24, 2009 is the 27<sup>th</sup> annual World TB Day, according to Rachel Birk, tuberculosis coordinator for the North Dakota Department of Health. Established by the World Health Organization in 1982, World TB Day is intended to raise awareness of the devastating health and economic consequences of tuberculosis disease.

This is the second year of the two year campaign endorsed by the World Health Organization using the slogan *I am stopping TB*. According to Birk, this slogan is a message of empowerment that encourages people to continue to do their part to control and eliminate TB. TB patients are stopping TB by taking all of their anti-TB medication. Health-care workers are stopping TB by recognizing the symptoms of TB and providing prompt diagnoses and treatment. Communities are stopping TB by sharing information to help prevent the disease and get treatment to those who need it.

“North Dakota is stopping TB. There were three cases of TB disease in 2008, which is down from the seven cases we had in 2007,” Birk said. “Although this drop in cases is encouraging, we still have a long way to go to eliminate TB in North Dakota.”

People at risk for getting TB include people from countries where TB is common, people who live or work in residential group settings, such as prisons and nursing homes, and those with chronic medical conditions, such as diabetes. Symptoms of TB disease include a cough that lasts more than three weeks, night sweats, unexplained weight loss, loss of appetite, and fatigue. The Department of Health recommends that anyone experiencing these symptoms should be evaluated by a physician immediately.

For information about tuberculosis, call the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180 or visit the TB program website at [www.ndhealth.gov/disease/tb](http://www.ndhealth.gov/disease/tb).

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600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200  
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: [health@nd.gov](mailto:health@nd.gov)

*Visit the health department home page at [www.ndhealth.gov](http://www.ndhealth.gov).*